



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/770,601	01/26/2001	Myra A. Lipos	72167.000247	6880

7590 02/23/2005

FISH & RICHARDSON  
225 Franklin Street  
Boston, MA 02110-2804

EXAMINER
----------

FALK, ANNE MARIE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1632

DATE MAILED: 02/23/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/770,601

Applicant(s)

LIPES ET AL.

Examiner

Anne-Marie Falk, Ph.D.

Art Unit

1632

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 December 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 27,30,31,60,61,64-74,79-83 and 86 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 27,30,31,60,74,79-82 and 86 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 61,64-73 and 83 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 January 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/1/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

Art Unit: 1632

### DETAILED ACTION

The amendment filed December 1, 2004 (hereinafter referred to as "the response") has been entered. Claims 27, 60, 61, 64-67, 69, and 71 have been amended.

Accordingly, Claims 27, 30, 31, 60, 61, 64-74, 79-83, and 86 remain pending in the instant application.

#### *Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114*

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on December 1, 2004 has been entered.

#### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112*

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

#### *Enablement*

Claims 61, 64-73, and 83 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for a method of producing insulin in a subject *in vivo* by introducing into the subject an intermediate lobe pituitary cell comprising a nucleic acid encoding insulin, wherein said nucleic acid is operatively linked to a heterologous promoter that directs expression of the nucleic acid sequence in the intermediate lobe pituitary, does not reasonably provide enablement for the use of

Art Unit: 1632

cells having other genetic modifications. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

In view of Applicants arguments at pages 8-16 of the response, the scope of enablement has been expanded to include promoters other than the pro-opiomelanocortin (POMC) promoter. Applicants argue that the testing of other promoters would be routine and that only a basal level of insulin secretion was needed to produce the result disclosed in the specification. However, the specification fails to enable regulated insulin secretion by use of the claimed method for reasons of record.

The claims are directed to a method of producing insulin in a subject *in vivo* by introducing into the subject an intermediate lobe pituitary cell comprising a nucleic acid encoding insulin, wherein said nucleic acid is operatively linked to a heterologous promoter that directs expression of the nucleic acid in the intermediate lobe pituitary cell.

The specification discloses transgenic NOD mice that carry a transgene encoding proinsulin under the control of the POMC promoter. The transgenic intermediate lobe pituitaries were transplanted under the kidney capsule of spontaneously diabetic NOD mice. Transplantation resulted in significant weight gain and in the complete remission of diabetic symptoms (page 26, line 11). The grafts showed no evidence of lymphocytic infiltration. At page 26, lines 23-24, the specification discloses that the great majority of insulin secreted by the transgenic pituitaries is fully processed, mature insulin.

The specification fails to provide an enabling disclosure for the use of transgene constructs that include genetic modifications directed to glucose stimulated secretion of insulin because the specification does not teach how to achieve glucose stimulated secretion of insulin and proper regulation of insulin secretion is critical for successfully carrying out the claimed method over the full scope which includes regulated secretion. While the specification discusses a variety of strategies for providing glucose-stimulated insulin secretion (e.g. by further providing transgenes that encode glucokinase, ion channels

Art Unit: 1632

that mediate glucose-stimulated insulin release, GLP-1, and/or GLUT-2) , specific guidance for actually achieving regulated insulin secretion is not provided to the skilled artisan. Achieving glucose-stimulated insulin secretion has been problematic in the art of *ex vivo* gene therapy and cell replacement therapy for diabetes. Halban et al. (2001) emphasize that the  $\beta$ -cell is remarkably sophisticated and that therapeutic strategies that use surrogate cells will have a number of hurdles to overcome to faithfully mimic the properties of this highly differentiated secretory cell (see abstract). The authors state that insulin is “normally secreted in a well-regulated fashion in rapid response to the metabolic needs of the individual and most specifically (but not exclusively) to changes in circulating levels of glucose” (abstract). The reference discusses the numerous hurdles that have been encountered in the development of therapeutic strategies that rely on gene therapy or cell-replacement therapy. The authors conclude that “it will be essential to have well-regulated insulin secretion” (page 2189, column 2, paragraph 2) and that “[i]ntroducing glucose-sensitivity to otherwise insensitive cells may be more complex than previously imagined” (page 2189, column 2, paragraph 2).

Xu et al. (2003) discuss the challenges to coupling the synthesis and release of the transgene insulin to serum glucose concentrations. The authors state that “[u]nlike gene therapy for hemophilia ... diabetes gene therapy is much more complicated, as this involves not only insulin generation, but also its modification and release. Insulin is of vital importance in maintaining glucose homeostasis, and its unique role as the only anabolic peptide hormone necessitates strict regulation and fast-acting mechanisms to guarantee efficient insulin biosynthesis and secretion ... A major impediment to successful insulin gene therapy has been the difficulty in coupling the synthesis and release of the transgene insulin to serum glucose concentrations. This tight coupling between glucose stimulation and insulin secretion has become the objective of paramount importance to most researchers” (page 73, column 1, paragraph 2). The reference further emphasizes that the ideal surrogate cells would possess the same characteristics

Art Unit: 1632

as the  $\beta$  cells including (i) glucose-dependent proinsulin gene transcription, (ii) proinsulin proteolytic processing, and (iii) glucose-dependent insulin secretion (page 71, column 1, paragraph 3).

Welsh (2000) provides a discussion of the prospects for gene therapy of diabetes mellitus that agrees with the analysis of Xu et al. (2003) and Halban et al. (2001) regarding the state of the art. Welsh points out that tight control of insulin release is essential to any therapeutic strategy. In discussing *ex vivo* gene therapy experiments and the various cell types used, Welsh states that “[u]nfortunately none of these cells respond to glucose with physiological secretion of insulin. Instead, it is only possible to achieve regulation of insulin gene transcription by using promoter constructs that respond to glucose. Because transcription is a much slower process than regulated release from secretory granules, there is a substantial risk of the insulin production getting out of phase with fluctuations in glucose levels leading to episodes of severe hypoglycemia. Thus, the generation of a substitute  $\beta$  cell from non- $\beta$  cells may prove to be exceedingly difficult” (page 181, column 1, paragraph 2).

Given the limited working examples and limited specific guidance for achieving regulated insulin secretion over the broad context of the claims, and further given the unpredictability in the art of *ex vivo* gene therapy for diabetes, one skilled in the art would have been required to engage in undue experimentation in order to practice the claimed method over the full scope.

At pages 9-14 of the response, Applicants argue that regulated secretion of insulin is not needed to produce a useful therapeutic effect and that “ideal” secretion is not needed. Applicant is reminded that the Examiner has already acknowledged a scope of enablement that corresponds to non-regulated, non-ideal secretion of insulin. Thus, these arguments will not be further addressed herein. The rejection is directed to other genetic modifications that are contemplated and claimed, directed to regulated secretion of insulin. The specification contemplates a variety of other proteins that could be expressed in a variety of different ways using a variety of different regulatory control elements. However, the specification fails to provide sufficient specific guidance for achieving regulated secretion of insulin from intermediate lobe

Art Unit: 1632

pituitary cells and the art demonstrates that achieving regulated secretion has been one of the major obstacles in the gene therapy and cell therapy art.

At page 15 of the response, Applicants assert that regulated secretion of insulin in response to glucose may require additional proteins. Applicants assert that the cellular machinery for controlled secretion is relatively well-understood and that the specification discloses a number of proteins that could be expressed in the intermediate lobe cells. Applicants assert that it would have been well within the ability of the skilled practitioner to select one or more of these proteins and express them in an intermediate lobe pituitary cell as claimed. However, this is not sufficient to enable the claimed invention when these other genetic modifications are added. It is not sufficient to be able to transfect cells and express the proteins within the cells, because as the specification points out there are many parameters that must be carefully considered in generating a cell that will provide regulated secretion of insulin in a physiological manner. The instant specification does not provide specific guidance for achieving regulated insulin secretion that produces a therapeutic effect and the art demonstrates that achieving regulated insulin secretion has been a major difficulty and leads to unpredictable results. Given the unpredictability in the art, the limited guidance in the specification, and the lack of working examples directed to regulated insulin secretion that provides a therapeutic effect, the skilled artisan would have been required to engage in undue experimentation to achieve therapeutic regulated insulin secretion using intermediate lobe cells.

### *Conclusion*

Claims 27, 30, 31, 60, 74, 79-82, and 86 are allowed.

Art Unit: 1632

All claims are drawn to the same invention claimed in the application prior to the entry of the submission under 37 CFR 1.114 and could have been finally rejected on the grounds and art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered in the application prior to entry under 37 CFR 1.114. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL** even though it is a first action after the filing of a request for continued examination and the submission under 37 CFR 1.114. See MPEP § 706.07(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Patent applicants with problems or questions regarding electronic images that can be viewed in the Patent Application Information Retrieval system (PAIR) can now contact the USPTO's Patent Electronic Business Center (Patent EBC) for assistance. Representatives are available to answer your questions daily from 6 am to midnight (EST). The toll free number is (866) 217-9197. When calling please have your application serial or patent number, the type of document you are having an image problem with, the number of pages and the specific nature of the problem. The Patent Electronic Business Center will notify applicants of the resolution of the problem within 5-7 business days. Applicants can also check PAIR to confirm that the problem has been corrected. The USPTO's Patent Electronic Business Center is a complete service center supporting all patent business on the Internet. The USPTO's PAIR system provides Internet-based access to patent application status and history



Art Unit: 1632

information. It also enables applicants to view the scanned images of their own application file folder(s) as well as general patent information available to the public.

For all other customer support, please call the USPTO Call Center (UCC) at 800-786-9199.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anne-Marie Falk whose telephone number is (571) 272-0728. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday from 10:30 AM to 7:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ram Shukla, can be reached on (571) 272-0735. The central official fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to (571) 272-0547.

Anne-Marie Falk, Ph.D.

*Anne-Marie Falk*  
ANNE-MARIE FALK, PH.D  
PRIMARY EXAMINER